10 tips

Nutrition Education Series

choose MyPlate

10 tips to a great plate



Making food choices for a healthy lifestyle can be as simple as using these 10 Tips. Use the ideas in this list to *balance your calories*, to choose foods to *eat more often*, and to cut back on foods to *eat less often*.

balance calories

Find out how many calories YOU need for a day
as a first step in managing your weight. Go to
www.ChooseMyPlate.gov to find your calorie level. Being
physically active also helps you balance calories.

enjoy your food, but eat less
Take the time to fully enjoy
your food as you eat it. Eating
too fast or when your attention is
elsewhere may lead to eating too
many calories. Pay attention to hunger
and fullness cues before, during, and after meals. Use
them to recognize when to eat and when you've had
enough.

avoid oversized portions
Use a smaller plate, bowl, and glass. Portion out foods before you eat. When eating out, choose a smaller size option, share a dish, or take home part of your meal.

foods to eat more often

Eat more vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and fat-free or 1% milk and dairy products. These foods have the nutrients you need for health—including potassium, calcium, vitamin D, and fiber. Make them the basis for meals and snacks.

make half your plate fruits and vegetables
Choose red, orange, and dark-green vegetables like tomatoes, sweet potatoes, and broccoli, along with other vegetables for your meals. Add fruit to meals as part of main or side dishes or as dessert.

switch to fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk
They have the same amount of calcium and other essential nutrients as whole milk, but fewer calories and less saturated fat.



make half your grains whole grains
To eat more whole grains, substitute a whole-grain
product for a refined product—such as eating wholewheat bread instead of white bread or brown rice instead of
white rice.

foods to eat less often
Cut back on foods high in solid fats, added sugars, and salt. They include cakes, cookies, ice cream, candies, sweetened drinks, pizza, and fatty meats like ribs, sausages, bacon, and hot dogs. Use these foods as occasional treats, not everyday foods.

compare sodium in foods
Use the Nutrition Facts label
to choose lower sodium versions
of foods like soup, bread, and frozen
meals. Select canned foods labeled
"low sodium," "reduced sodium," or
"no salt added."



drink water instead of sugary drinks
Cut calories by drinking water or unsweetened
beverages. Soda, energy drinks, and sports drinks
are a major source of added sugar, and calories, in American
diets.